



Commonwealth of
Massachusetts

2016 Annual Report



MASSACHUSETTS

**Department of
Early Education and Care**

Submitted
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Executive Summary

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was established in 2005 with a mission to provide *"the foundation that supports all children in their development as lifelong learners and contributing members of the community, and supports families in their essential work as parents and caregivers."* The Department of Early Education and Care serves as the entry point of Massachusetts' birth to 21 education pipeline. "Early education and care" includes formal programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children during out-of-school time; group homes; foster care and adoption placement agencies; and residential schools for children with special needs; as well as programs in informal settings such as home visiting, and community-based family engagement networks that provide literacy and other developmental activities for children and parents in libraries and adult education centers.

The Department of Early Education and Care endeavors to deliver the most effective high-quality, comprehensive early learning and development system in the nation. This requires ensuring that the 9,000 programs we license meet safety and best practice standards through regulatory review, technical assistance, and monitoring, and are supported in advancing to higher levels of quality through a system of standards and support. At the heart of a high-quality and comprehensive early education and care system are its educators, and the Department works to build the knowledge, competencies and career pathways of the 100,000 educators who comprise our workforce and are key to closing the early achievement gap and ensuring that all of our children enter school ready to succeed. To this end, some of our accomplishments and achievements in 2016 included:

- ✚ We provided continued access to subsidies for high-quality early education and care for eligible low-income and at-risk families, averaging support of 56,000 children daily;
- ✚ We enrolled an additional 2,300 children, who were on a waiting list for a subsidy, in a high-quality early education and care program; 400 of these children were from homeless families;
- ✚ We provided a year of free high-quality preschool to 850 four-year-old children through the *Preschool Expansion* program; by graduation the children demonstrated age-appropriate skills in math, letter-word recognition, self-regulation and the ability to develop positive relationships;
- ✚ Our family engagement networks provided developmental screenings for 3,000 young children;
- ✚ Our Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Networks provided services to over 300 children at-risk of suspension or expulsion from an early education and care program, and 72% of these children successfully remained in their programs;
- ✚ More than half of our licensed early education and care programs are participating in our Quality Rating and Improvement System that supports programs in attaining high levels of quality;
- ✚ We supported 120 college courses in early childhood education at colleges across the state that were accessed by nearly 2,000 early childhood educators; and
- ✚ We supported higher salaries for early educators by increasing the rate paid to subsidized center-based child care providers and to Family Child Care Systems Administrators by 3.6%.



In 2014, the Board of Early Education and Care set a five year Strategic Plan for the Department that set the vision and priorities for the agency's work. This report provides an update on EEC's accomplishments and activities over the past year (January to December 2016) in each of the four areas of the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Direction #1: All young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and their families will be provided with opportunities to support their children's cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and physical development.

The Department of Early Education and Care licenses nearly 10,000 group child care centers, family child care homes, residential programs, and foster care/adoption placement agencies across the Commonwealth, that have the capacity to serve over 230,000 children. On a daily basis, EEC supports an average of 56,000 children from low-income or at-risk families to attend a high quality early education and care program. In fiscal year 2016 (FY16), a \$12 million "waitlist remediation" appropriation in the state budget provided the families of 2,200 children who were on a waiting list for financial assistance with a voucher to subsidize the cost of child care. Approximately 1,700 of these children were homeless or from low-income families, and 600 were from families involved with the Department of Children and Families. EEC also expanded access to early education and care through the federally-funded Preschool Expansion Grant program, which provides a year of free-preschool to four-year-old children. In 2016 the first cohort of students graduated and the second cohort of students began in the program; approximately 850 students across the five participating cities of Springfield, Holyoke, Boston, Lawrence, and Lowell are served in each yearly cohort. In January 2017, EEC released a report of findings from the first cohort of students who attended preschool in the 2015-2016 school year. The evaluation found that the classrooms in all five communities provided high-quality learning environments and the participating children showed positive developmental results after the first year.

Through funding appropriated in the FY16 state budget, in January 2016 EEC awarded "Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative" grants to 13 communities to support them in identifying resources needed to offer increased levels of high quality preschool programming for low-income children in their community who otherwise may not have access to a preschool experience, through a model similar to the *Preschool Expansion Grant* initiative. In January 2017, EEC released a report of findings from the "Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative" program which showed the need for preschool expansion in all of these communities. In their individual strategic plans, all 13 participating communities proposed that they could implement a pilot that collectively would provide 1,000 children with access to preschool in the first year, through collaborations between public school districts and community-based early education programs, pending available funding.

In addition to providing access to formal early education and care, EEC provided informal early education opportunities for children through the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) program. EEC funded 89 CFCE networks across the state that provide families in 348 communities with parent-child activities that promote children's language and literacy skill development, and linkages to comprehensive services that support children's optimal development and school readiness. In both fiscal years 2016 and 2017, EEC provided funding for early education and care programs to use screening and formative assessment tools to measure preschool and Kindergarten age children's social-emotional and cognitive development. EEC also provided supports to address developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges faced by children and their families through the Mental Health Consultation Grant program, which provides consultation services designed to help ensure children's healthy social-emotional



development, promote children's success in school, and reduce the rate of suspensions and expulsions in early education and care settings.

Strategic Direction #2: Programs offered in early childhood, out of school time settings licensed or license exempt by the EEC will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens.

In 2016 the Department of Early Education and Care continued planning to implement a Differential Licensing model for all program license types, where the frequency and depth of monitoring is based directly on licensed providers' history of compliance with key risk indicators including adequate staffing, functional communication logs, and evidence of emergency preparedness. EEC expects to fully implement Differential Licensing in early 2017. In preparation for the transition to Differential Licensing, this year EEC began using the cloud-based LEAD (Licensing Education Analytic Database) system platform. The first phase of LEAD was implemented in January 2016 for use with recording licensing visits and investigation reports. In addition, this year EEC provided licensees with access to a "provider portal" in LEAD for select licensing-related functions that are part of the Differential Licensing model.

EEC also continued to conduct investigations as needed to ensure the health and safety of children in care, in response to allegations of serious injuries, neglect or abuse. EEC investigates allegations of non-compliance with EEC licensing regulations, and also conducts investigations in response to any 51A reports (i.e., reports filed with the Department of Children and Families/DCF pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, sec. 51A, alleging abuse or neglect of children) that are filed against EEC-licensed or approved programs, whether they are screened in for investigation by DCF or not. From January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, EEC received 1,598 51A reports alleging abuse or neglect of children involving EEC-licensed programs. (Please note that this number may include multiple reports filed on the same allegation.) Our investigators detail their findings in written investigation reports which may recommend enforcement action up to emergency suspension or revocation of a program's license to care for children.

EEC also continued to conduct extensive background records checks on individuals in our licensed and funded programs in order to ensure the safest environments possible for children. For three of the mandatory background checks -- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), Sex Offender Record Information (SORI), and the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Registry of Alleged Perpetrators -- EEC processed an estimated 350,000 checks of these systems for 80,000 individual applicants in 2016. EEC also received and reviewed the results of fingerprint-based checks of the national and state criminal history databases for over 30,000 individual applicants in 2016. EEC increased the frequency of cross checks on the addresses of child care facilities with the addresses of registered sex offenders maintained by the Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB), from a monthly to a weekly basis. In 2016 a new data sharing process was implemented with SORB that has significantly reduced the manual effort involved in conducting the cross-checks and thus decreased the turnaround time for completing the reviews.

EEC also promotes high-quality in early education and care programs through the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), in order to enhance outcomes for all children in Massachusetts, especially those populations most at risk. In the QRIS, program quality is measured across five areas of standards: Curriculum and Learning; Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments; Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; Family and Community Engagement; and Leadership, Management and Administration. Quality is rated across four levels, with four being the highest level of quality. At the end of 2016, 5,313 programs were participating in the QRIS. Of these programs, 207 were rated Level 3 and



23 were rated Level 4 on the QRIS. In 2016, EEC and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute completed a study to validate whether the QRIS tiers accurately reflect differential levels of program quality, and assesses the extent to which quality ratings are related to children's progress in learning, development, and school readiness. EEC is using the findings from the Validation Study to inform potential revisions to the QRIS.

In June 2016 the Department awarded a second round of Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Capital Fund grants to support facility improvements at early education programs that serve low-income children. Six agencies received a total of \$3.6 million dollars to renovate existing facilities or purchase new buildings. The FY16 grant awards will improve the quality of existing settings for approximately 500 children in programs licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care, will increase the capacity of these programs to serve an additional 119 children in higher quality settings, and will support the creation of 179 jobs during the grant period.

The Department of Early Education and Care also continued to be actively involved with the state's Birth to Grade Three (B-3) alignment Advisory Group, which focuses on alignment across this age group as a comprehensive strategy for improving young children's access to high quality programs serving children between birth and grade three, and strengthening the capacity of elementary schools to sustain student learning gains in the early elementary school years. In 2016, the B-3 Advisory Group focused on examining comprehensive early childhood assessment systems, in coordination with the Early Literacy Expert Panel. As part of this work, EEC and ESE conducted a joint survey of EEC-licensed programs and public school districts on screening practices, and will continue to collaborate with the Early Literacy Expert Panel in 2017 to put forth policy guidance on effective observation-based early childhood assessment and screening, including recommendations for a screening tool.

EEC is also working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to create a common set of quality indicators for afterschool and out-of-school time (ASOST) programs. EEC and ESE contracted with the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to conduct an alignment study of ASOST quality indicators in Massachusetts. EDC's recommendations included ensuring that state-level systems and structures are in place to support ongoing coordination between EEC and ESE towards alignment of ASOST quality initiatives, and engaging in a process to create a single set of ASOST quality indicators through a phased approach.

Strategic Direction #3: The early childhood and out-of-school time workforce who works with children and families in the Commonwealth is professionally prepared, adequately compensated, and diverse.

In 2016, the Department of Early Education and Care placed a strong focus on strengthening the early educator workforce as a key to providing high levels of program quality that lead to improved outcomes for children. The Board of Early Education and Care has directed its attention to the needs of the early education workforce, its opportunities for entry and advancement in the field, and the rates paid to programs to support their staff. The Department engaged in an analysis of workforce resources and needs; some key findings from this work include the following:

- The workforce is stressed, turnover is high, educators cannot afford a degree and do not see the benefit in investing in one when higher compensation does not follow.



2016 Annual Report to the Legislature

Department of Early Education and Care

- In Massachusetts, the median wage for child care workers has decreased by 2% and the wage for preschool teachers by 5% since 2010 and 39% of child care worker families participate in one or more public income support program. (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016)
- EEC subsidies and most grant funds are not directly targeted to wages, and regulation and policy do not dictate rates of pay or require that funds are used for pay increases.
- Existing initiatives do not fully address the needs of a diverse workforce with limited access to formal education due to cost, location, time, and language and technology limitations.
- EEC's Information Technology capacity does not support the field: the Professional Qualifications Registry does not capture growth, the Teacher Qualifications system is manual with backlogs that delay licensing, EEC lacks a method for offering on-line courses including ones required for licensing, and EEC lacks capacity to track impact of scholarship funds on degree attainment.

In order to formulate and implement an ambitious workforce agenda to address these findings, Commissioner Weber has implemented a reorganization of the agency. At all levels of the organization, EEC staff are charged with the support of the early education workforce in the field, towards the larger goal of ensuring safe and high-quality programs that support children's well-being, healthy development, and learning.

Activities in furtherance of the workforce development agenda in 2016 included support for EEC's five Educator and Provider Support (EPS) Networks which provide degree/career pathway supports for early educators across the state through coaching, mentoring, planning, and access to professional development that aligns with EEC licensing regulations, EEC core competencies for early educators, Massachusetts' early learning guidelines, and the state's QRIS Standards. Nearly 2,000 educators accessed college coursework, and over 4,000 received coaching, academic advising, and career counseling support through the EPS networks in 2016. Educators also had access to higher education through the Early Childhood Educator Scholarship program with the Department of Higher Education. In the 2016-17 academic year, 743 educators were approved for an Early Childhood Educator Scholarship that will fund the cost of up to six credits in the Fall 2016 term and up to six credits in the Spring 2017 term. EEC also partnered with North Shore Community College, Salem State University, and Burlington Public Schools to again this year offer EarlyEdCon -- a professional development conference for early educators -- in fall 2016. The conference topics included language and literacy skill development, preschool Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, and children's social and emotional development. EEC will offer an EarlyEdCon in the western part of the state in Spring 2017.

Strategic Direction #4: The Department and Board of Early Education and Care will provide leadership, direction and resources to meet the mission of the agency with utmost integrity, transparency and accountability to the people of the Commonwealth.

The Board of Early Education and Care (EEC Board) continued its regular schedule of meeting monthly in open session from September to June. The meetings included at least 30 minutes for public testimony. In 2016, the Board held seven of the meetings in the EEC Boston office and three of the meetings regionally (in Holyoke on March 8, 2016; in Webster on June 14, 2016; and in Worcester on December 13, 2016) to allow for greater participation of stakeholders across the state. The EEC Board held its yearly retreat on August 4, 2016 and focused the discussion on Department operations, early educator workforce development and compensation, and information technology infrastructure to support the workforce.



The EEC Board also continued with the committee structure consisting of an Oversight Committee that meets monthly, and *ad hoc* working groups that meet as needed to address specific objectives that support the agency and are guided by the larger strategic goals of the Board. The Oversight Committee reviews EEC budget-related activities that are brought to the Board for discussion and decision making. The EEC Board convened a Workforce and Quality Improvement *ad hoc* working group five times in 2016; agenda topics covered by this working group included the findings from the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) validation study and an assessment of resources and needs related to the state's early education workforce. In 2016, Governor Baker appointed Sheila Balboni to the Board of Early Education and Care, and reappointed Mary Walachy to the EEC Board.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, §3A there is also an Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (EEC Advisory Council). The EEC Advisory Council is comprised of representatives from the early childhood, K-12, and higher education sectors; civic, labor, and business communities; social service agencies; health care providers; and parent organizations. EEC's Advisory Council members represent a geographic balance of the state and reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth in race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. All appointees have a special expertise or interest in high-quality early childhood education and care. The Advisory Council may review and offer comments on any rules or regulations before promulgation by the Board of Early Education and Care, and may, from time to time, make recommendations to the Board that it considers appropriate for changes and improvements in early education and care programs and services. The EEC Advisory Council met four times in 2016 and reviewed the following topics: the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan (March 18, 2016); EEC's workforce landscape (May 20, 2016); the QRIS Validation Study (September 30, 2016) and EEC's workforce development and QRIS strategies (December 16, 2016).

The fiscal year 2017 (FY17) General Appropriations Act (GAA) appropriated \$553.1 million for the Department's total budget. Notable items included \$12.5 million to support rate increases for center-based child care providers who accept EEC child care subsidies, \$200,000 for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative that supports planning grants for communities to expand their preschool offerings, and the adoption of the Governor's Budget Recommendation to consolidate funding for most of the activities that EEC performs focused on quality, allowing for greater alignment of quality funding across the agency. The new Quality Supports line item totals \$32.4 million that was consolidated from six accounts, including the line-items listed in the following table:

Line item	Account name- specific transfers	Transfers to Quality Account
3000-1000	EEC Admin- Licensor salaries, travel, fringe	(6,754,471)
3000-7050	Community & Family Supports- Staff, QRIS, EPS grants, misc.	(7,872,890)
3000-5075	Universal Pre-Kindergarten- all funding	(7,400,000)
3000-6075	Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation- all funding	(750,000)
3000-3060	Supportive/DTA- Mental Health Grants	(600,000)
3000-4060	Income Eligible- IPLE Grants	(9,019,276)
3000-1020	Early Education and Care Quality Supports	32,396,637

In July 2016, EEC rolled out the billing module in the Child Care Financial Assistance system (CCFA), which is the platform for managing approximately \$500 million annually in child care subsidies. All subsidized child care providers are now required to use CCFA for submitting their billing to EEC, and EEC is issuing payments based on the attendance and placement data in CCFA. Previously in FY16 providers billed EEC



outside of CCFA and EEC paid the estimated invoice amount. EEC is now in the process of reconciling these payments with the FY16 data in CCFA, and has repaid and is recouping any differences between what was billed through CCFA and what was paid through FY16 estimated billing. Repayment to providers that are owed money by EEC was paid in November 2016, the first month of the reconciliation. Recoupment from providers that owe EEC money will be collected over a longer period depending on the balance due. EEC worked closely with each provider to formulate a repayment plan.

In 2016, EEC completed final work under the federally-funded Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, which was a four-year initiative that started in January 2012. EEC had received a no-cost extension from the US Department of Education in August 2015 to provide additional time from January to December 2016 to work towards meeting the grant goal of improving program quality to better prepare children for Kindergarten entry. The main project under the extension was the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) which supports the development of a data-driven IT system that is fully interoperable with the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System and can be made interoperable with other data systems from the health and child welfare sectors. Overall, the funding from the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant provided EEC with critical resources to support the early education and care field through new initiatives, collaborations with key stakeholders, and enhanced infrastructure, that in turn helped to strengthen the early education landscape in Massachusetts.



Submission of Annual Report:

This report satisfies the Board of Early Education and Care's reporting mandates, as codified in M.G.L. c. 15D, §§ 3(g), 4, 5, 10, and 13(d), to submit an annual report describing its progress in achieving the goals and implementing the programs authorized under Chapter 15D of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. The accomplishments and activities described in this report are for 2016.

(See Appendix A for the reporting language).

Mission of Department:

The Department of Early Education and Care was established in 2005 with a mission to provide "***the foundation that supports all children in their development as lifelong learners and contributing members of the community, and supports families in their essential work as parents and caregivers.***"

We support this mission in partnership with the approximately 10,000 programs licensed by the Commonwealth through our agency. The Department of Early Education and Care serves as the entry point of Massachusetts' birth to 21 education pipeline. "Early education and care" includes formal programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children during out-of-school time; group homes; foster care and adoption placement agencies; and residential schools for children with special needs; as well as programs in informal settings such as home visiting and community-based family engagement networks that provide literacy and other developmental activities for children and parents in libraries and adult education centers. We also administer financial support for children from families that are low-income or who have been referred by the Department of Children and Families or the Department of Transitional Assistance, to attend a high-quality early education and care program.

The Department of Early Education and Care endeavors to deliver the most effective high-quality, comprehensive early learning and development system in the nation. This requires ensuring that programs meet safety and best practice standards through regulatory review, technical assistance, and monitoring, and are supported in advancing to higher levels of quality through a system of standards and support. At the heart of a high-quality and comprehensive early education and care system are its educators, and to this end the Department works to build the knowledge, competencies and career pathways of the 100,000 educators who comprise our workforce and are key to closing the early achievement gap and ensuring that all of our children enter school ready to succeed.



Governance:

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is part of the Executive Office of Education, one of eight Executive Offices under Governor Charlie Baker. Education Secretary James A. Peyser oversees the Executive Office of Education and is Governor Baker's top advisor on education. The Commissioner of Early Education and Care, Thomas L. Weber, manages the Department of Early Education and Care.

An eleven member Board of Early Education and Care sets policies and regulations related to early education and care programs and services in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Education Secretary Peyser and the Secretary of Health and Human Services are ex-officio members of the Board of Early Education and Care; the other nine members are appointed by the Governor. Commissioner Weber is the Secretary to the Board. The members of the Board of Early Education and Care are:

Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D, Chair

Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society, Harvard University

At-large Representative

James A. Peyser - Secretary, Executive Office of Education

Marylou Sudders - Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Mary Walachy, Vice Chairperson - Executive Director of the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
At-large Representative

Sheila Balboni - Executive Director, The Community Group
Appointed as early education and care provider with management and administrative experience

Joni Block - Grant Specialist, Brockton Public Schools
Appointed as an early education and care teacher

Jondavid "J.D." Chesloff - Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable
Appointed as business representative with demonstrated commitment in education

Kathleen C. Joyce – Head of US Corporate Affairs and Media Relations, Shire
Appointed as a parent of a child receiving early education and care services

Alison Schonwald, MD - Pediatrician; Medical Director, Developmental Behavioral Outreach, Boston Children's Hospital
Appointed as pediatrician with a focus on child development

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ed.D. - Associate Professor at Wheelock College
Appointed as an expert in evaluation and assessment of pre-schools

Joan Wasser Gish, Esq. - Director of Strategic Initiatives, Boston College
At-large Representative



On August 1, 2016, Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services, designated Patricia Mackin to perform her duties as a member of the Board of Early Education and Care.

On August 31, 2016, Governor Baker appointed Sheila Balboni to the Board of Early Education and Care, as an early education and care provider with management and administrative experience.

On September 9, 2016, Governor Baker reappointed Mary Walachy to the Board of Early Education and Care.

On January 13, 2017, Governor Baker appointed Alison Schonwald, MD to the Board of Early Education and Care, as a pediatrician with a focus on child development.

The Board of Early Education and Care (EEC Board) meets monthly from September to June each year. The meetings are open to the public and include 30 minutes for public testimony. The Board holds most meetings in the EEC Boston office, however in 2016 the Board also held meetings in Holyoke (March 8, 2016), Webster (June 14, 2016), and Worcester (December 13, 2016) to allow for greater participation of stakeholders across the state. The EEC Board held its yearly retreat on August 4, 2016 and focused the discussion on Department operations, early educator workforce development and compensation, and information technology infrastructure to support the workforce.

The EEC Board continued with the committee structure consisting of an Oversight Committee that meets monthly, and *ad hoc* working groups that meet as needed to address specific objectives that support the agency and are guided by the larger strategic goals of the Board. The Oversight Committee reviews EEC budget-related activities that are brought to the Board for discussion and decision making, and supports EEC's efforts to implement a system to improve and support quality statewide and to offer an array of high quality, comprehensive, and affordable programs designed to meet the diverse and individual needs of children and families. Dr. Beth Childs chaired the Oversight Committee in 2016; EEC Board Member J.D. Chesloff assumed chairmanship of the Oversight Committee in January 2017. The EEC Board also convened a Workforce and Quality Improvement *ad hoc* working group five times in 2016; agenda topics covered by this working group included the findings from the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) validation study and an assessment of resources and needs related to the state's early education workforce.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, §3A there is also an Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (EEC Advisory Council). The EEC Advisory Council is comprised of representatives from the early childhood, K-12, and higher education sectors; civic, labor, and business communities; social service agencies; health care providers; and parent organizations. EEC's Advisory Council members represent a geographic balance of the state and reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth in race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. All appointees have a special expertise or interest in high-quality early childhood education and care. The Advisory Council may review and offer comments on any rules or regulations before promulgation by the Board of Early Education and Care, and may, from time to time, make recommendations to the Board that it considers appropriate for changes and improvements in early education and care programs and services. The EEC Advisory Council met four times in 2016 and reviewed the following topics: the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan (March 18, 2016); EEC's workforce landscape (May 20, 2016); the QRIS Validation Study (September 30, 2016) and EEC's workforce development and QRIS strategies (December 16, 2016).



Statutory Responsibilities and Strategic Directions:

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the lead agency for all early education and care services and funding in the Commonwealth. EEC is the state education agency for the purposes of early education and care services under federal law and is responsible for compliance with early education and care services under the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-193). EEC's statutory obligations include:

- Seeking federal funds for early education and care services;
- Licensing or approval of early education and care programs, group care facilities, adoption and placement agencies, school-aged child care programs, and temporary shelter facilities;
- Establishing provider rates and participant fees for EEC-licensed programs;
- Implementing a number of programs and administering any related grant awards;
- Providing ongoing program monitoring to ensure quality as well as adherence to regulations and standards;
- Providing Technical Assistance to providers and potential providers;
- Facilitating the development of the EEC workforce and, when appropriate, providing training and Professional Development;
- Maintaining an educator database and comprehensive waitlist of children expressing interest in services;
- Providing family education in English and other, commonly spoken languages when available and;
- Addressing infant and toddler needs, including parent education, early literacy services, and informal developmental opportunities.

The EEC Board's Strategic Plan¹ for the Department of Early Education and Care focuses on four key areas:

1. All young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and their families will be provided with opportunities to support their children's cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and physical development.
2. Programs offered in early childhood and out of school time settings licensed or license-exempt by the EEC will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens.
3. The early childhood and out-of-school time workforce who works with children and families in the Commonwealth is professionally prepared, adequately compensated, and diverse.
4. The Department and Board of Early Education and Care will provide leadership, direction and resources to meet the mission of the agency with utmost integrity, transparency and accountability to the people of the Commonwealth.

¹ EEC Strategic Plan 2014-2019. Adopted by the Board of Early Education and Care on June 10, 2014.



Progress in 2016:

EEC endeavors to deliver the most effective high-quality, comprehensive early learning and development system in the nation. To this end, the Department of Early Education and Care has worked to ensure that programs meet safety and best practice standards through regulatory review, technical assistance, and monitoring, and are supported in advancing to higher levels of quality through a system of standards and support. At the heart of a high-quality and comprehensive early education and care system are its educators, and we are committed to building the knowledge, competencies and career pathways of the 100,000 educators who comprise our workforce and are key to closing the early achievement gap and ensuring that all of our children enter school ready to succeed. The Legislature's continued commitment to education has helped EEC make significant progress in 2016 in advancing the quality of early education programs in Massachusetts and in increasing access to these programs for children and families in need.

The 2016 year included a focus on several major federally-sponsored initiatives and requirements, including the completion of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELC), the reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and the implementation of the Preschool Expansion Grant program. Highlights of the RTTT-ELC grant and CCDBG are provided below; the Preschool Expansion Grant activities are included under the progress on the Department's Strategic Directions section of this report (which begins on page 14.)

New Child Care Development Block Grant Requirements:

The 2014 re-authorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program brought new mandates that the Department spent considerable focus on in 2016 in order to ensure that we remain eligible for nearly \$500 million in federal reimbursement claims annually. The CCDBG reauthorization requires states to conduct annual, unannounced compliance monitoring visits for both licensed and license-exempt child care providers; post licensing studies, monitoring reports, and major investigation findings online; and conduct additional levels of educator background record checks. The Department has been actively innovating our practice to more effectively utilize resources to support the programs that we oversee, including developing a differential licensing model that utilizes targeted indicators to assess programs' risk of non-compliance and level of needed monitoring.

Completion of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant:

In 2016, EEC completed final work under the federally-funded Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. EEC had received a no-cost extension to provide additional time in 2016 to complete work on the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) which supports the development of a data-driven IT system that is fully inter-operable with the K-12 Statewide Longitudinal Data System and can be made interoperable with other data systems from the health and child welfare sectors. The overarching goal of the RTT-ELC grant initiative was to promote and support high quality early education across the states. In Massachusetts we realized this goal, as we saw more programs participate in our Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and reach higher levels of quality; with the support of the Program Quality Specialists team by 2016 53% of eligible programs were participating in the QRIS and there were 265 programs at the higher QRIS levels (as compared to only four programs in 2013). Overall, the funding from the RTT-ELC grant provided EEC with critical resources to support the early education and care field through new initiatives, collaborations with key stakeholders, and enhanced infrastructure, that in turn helped to strengthen the early education landscape in Massachusetts.



The remainder of this report summarizes EEC's activities in 2016 as required by law, and progress in each of the four Strategic Directions for the Department.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS / FIVE-YEAR GOALS

Strategic Direction #1: All young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and their families will be provided with opportunities to support their children's cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and physical development.

Child Care Financial Assistance

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) provides financial assistance for children from eligible families to attend high quality early education and care programs. EEC subsidizes approximately 56,000 children from birth to age 14 (up to age 16 for children with a special need) in settings across EEC's mixed delivery system of care, which includes center-based programs, family child care homes, public preschool programs, and Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms. Together these programs have the capacity to serve over 230,000 children.

The three major state funding programs for child care financial assistance that EEC administers are Income Eligible Child Care, Supportive Child Care, and Transitional Child Care. The Income Eligible Child Care program provides child care financial assistance for low-income families with a service need, on a first come/first served basis. The Supportive Child Care Program provides child care placements for families who are receiving or at risk of receiving, protective services through the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Protective services include foster care; a physical, mental, emotional or medical condition; or participation in a drug treatment or rehabilitation program. The Transitional Child Care Program provides child care vouchers for families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) cash assistance and participating in the Employment Services Program, or who are in the 12 month period after close of their TAFDC benefits. The Income Eligible Child Care Program also funds two specific types of care: Teen Parent Child Care and Homeless Child Care for families residing in homeless shelters affiliated with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); or domestic violence shelters and substance abuse shelters affiliated with DCF. On average per month in 2016, 608 children residing in shelters and/or hotels and 318 children of teen parents were enrolled in an EEC-contracted early education and care program. (See Appendix C for the number of children served through EEC's child care financial assistance programs.)

Waitlist Remediation

In FY16 the Department of Early Education and Care received a third straight year of funding to remediate the waitlist for child care through a \$12 million appropriation that supported the enrollment of 1,768 children on the Income Eligible Child Care waitlist (including over 400 children from homeless families), and 600 children on the DCF Supportive Child Care waitlist, in an early education and care program. (See Appendix D for waitlist data.) Waitlist remediation funding was not included in the Department's FY17 budget. In 2016 the total number of children on the Income Eligible waitlist continued to remain steady. Access to Income Eligible child care contracted slots was open in FY16 and remains open in FY17, along with Income Eligible child care vouchers for continuity of care, siblings, and children of military families. The Department continues to evaluate waitlist policies and procedures to ensure that the waitlist remains clean and well maintained while not harming the families in need of care.



Preschool Expansion Grant

In November 2016, the Department of Early Education and Care received a third year of funding from the federal “Preschool Expansion Grant” program, in the amount of \$15 million. This award brings the total funding that Massachusetts has received from the “Preschool Expansion Grant” program to \$45 million over three years. The “Preschool Expansion Grant” program provides a year of free, high-quality preschool to four-year-old children from low-income families who otherwise would not have access to preschool before entering Kindergarten, in five communities: Springfield, Holyoke, Boston, Lawrence and Lowell. Through the grant funding, 48 new preschool classrooms were opened in fall 2015 with space for approximately 850 children in each year of the grant. The first cohort of students attended preschool in the 2015-2016 school year and the second cohort is attending preschool in the current 2016-2017 school year. The third funding award will allow another class of 850 students in Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell and Springfield to attend a year of free, high-quality preschool in the 2017-2018 school year. Massachusetts is eligible to receive a fourth year of funding for the 2018-2019 school year, subject to budget appropriation. The 48 “Preschool Expansion Grant” program site locations are listed below.

Boston (15 Classrooms)

Roxbury YMCA
285 Martin Luther King Boulevard

East Boston YMCA
215 Bremen Street

Walnut Grove Head Start (ABCD)
22 Elm Hill Ave, Boston

Nurtury
38 Horadan Way (Ruggles), Roxbury
33 Bickford St, Jamaica Plain
436 Tremont St, Boston

Wesley Education Center
29 Stanton St., Dorchester

Ellis Memorial
58 Berkeley St., Boston

Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester
1135 Dorchester Ave

Paige Academy, Inc.
40 Highland Ave, Roxbury

Catholic Charities (Nazareth)
19 St. Joseph St., Jamaica Plain

Catholic Charities (Konbit-Kreyol)
185 Columbia St., Dorchester

Holyoke (4 Classrooms)

Kelly Full Service School
(Holyoke Chicopee Springfield
Head Start)
216 West Street

Lawrence Full Service
Community School (Holyoke
Chicopee Springfield Head
Start)
156 Cabot Street

Sullivan School (Valley
Opportunity Council)
400 Jarvis Avenue

Morgan Full Service
Community School (Valley
Opportunity Council)
596 South Bridge Street

Lawrence (10 Classrooms)

Lawrence Early Achievement
Partnership at Head Start
(GLCAC Inc., Head Start)
96 East Haverhill Street

Lawrence Early Achievement
Partnership at The Community
Group (The Community Group)
404 Haverhill Street

Lowell (8 Classrooms)

Lowell Collaborative Preschool
Academy (Community
Teamwork/CTI and Little
Sprouts)
554 Pawtucket Street

Springfield (11 Classrooms)

Square One, Holyoke Chicopee
Springfield Head Start, YMCA of
Greater Springfield
15 Catherine Street

Family Square @ Square One
1095 Main Street

Learning Center @ YMCA of
Greater Springfield
275 Chestnut Street

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield
Head Start
33 Wilbraham Road (Mason
Square)



The "Preschool Expansion Grant" funds support high quality program offerings through required design elements such as inclusive full-day and full-year programming with low child-to-teacher ratios (10:1 or less); workforce development supports for educators, including individualized growth plans, joint professional development between the school district and community early education programs, and coaching and mentoring; and use of highly credentialed educators who are compensated at a rate comparable to public school district salaries. The classes provide programming for the children from 8 to 10 hours per day.

The Department of Early Education and Care is contracting with Abt Associates to conduct a longitudinal evaluation of the programs funded by the "Preschool Expansion Grant." In December 2016, the Department and Abt Associates released a report of findings from the first cohort of students who attended preschool in the 2015-2016 school year. The evaluation found that the classrooms in all five communities provided high-quality learning environments and the participating children showed positive developmental results after the first year. The first year of the "Preschool Expansion Grant" program showed that collaborations between public school districts and licensed early education providers can be effective at designing and implementing high-quality pre-Kindergarten programs in a relatively short period of time. Major findings from the evaluation included:

- At the end of their year in the "Preschool Expansion Grant" program, the children demonstrated age-appropriate skills in math, letter-word recognition, self-regulation and the ability to develop positive relationships;
- Teachers were well compensated, well-educated and generally satisfied with their positions;
- The classroom observations conducted six months after opening found moderate to high levels of quality across three different measures of important dimensions of classroom quality; and
- The majority of families surveyed reported feeling well informed and connected to the program and confident in their ability to communicate with their child's teacher.

Based on the results of the evaluation, the "Preschool Expansion Grant" program is providing additional focus on several areas in order to achieve higher levels of quality, including: alignment of professional development supports for educators, collaboration for inclusive programming, more consistent provision of comprehensive services to children and families, and capacity-building at all levels. In the 2016-2017 year of the "Preschool Expansion Grant" program, Abt Associates began an impact evaluation that will provide causal estimates of the effects of grant-funded programs at the end of the preschool year, the end of Kindergarten, and the end of 1st Grade.

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative - State Planning Grant

In January 2016, the Department of Early Education and Care awarded \$500,000 in "Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative" grants to 13 communities -- Athol, Brockton, Cape Cod, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, North Adams, Pittsfield, Somerville, Springfield and Worcester - to develop strategic plans for expanding access to high-quality preschool for 3 to 5 year old children in their community through public-private partnerships. Each community received a grant award of up to \$40,000 to increase community-level readiness for preschool expansion by establishing shared visions among public school districts, EEC-licensed programs and other local stakeholders; conducting needs assessments; setting priorities; and identifying available resources.

In January 2017, the Department released a report of findings from the "Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative" program which showed the need for preschool expansion in all of these



communities. In their individual strategic plans, all 13 participating communities proposed that they could implement a pilot that collectively would provide 1,000 children with access to preschool in the first year, through collaborations between public school districts and community-based early education programs, pending available funding. Themes in the key findings and recommendations from the participating communities' strategic plans included the following:

- ***Lack of preschool experience:*** There is a high demand for full-day, full-year preschool programs across all communities. The needs assessments highlighted that many children enter Kindergarten without prior early education experiences. For example, in Lowell and Fall River, approximately 50% of children enter Kindergarten without any formal preschool experience. Most communities would prioritize children who have no previous early education experience.
- ***Need among economically disadvantaged families:*** Families with an income of just over 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, and working families in poverty who do not qualify for other financial assistance, are noted as demonstrating a particular need for free pre-Kindergarten. Each of the communities recommend that any new preschool slots be available for working and low-income families.
- ***Program quality:*** All communities' plans included attention to continuous quality improvement through a variety of educator and program supports. Implementation of an evidence-based, developmentally-appropriate curriculum aligned with K-12 programs and/or Kindergarten readiness indicators are components of each plan.
- ***Educator qualifications and supports:*** Plans addressed the need to offer coaching, support for degree attainment, and increased compensation for educators in order to attract, retain and support highly qualified staff.
- ***Capacity:*** Some communities report they would need to identify, renovate, repurpose, or purchase additional space in order to implement preschool expansion plans. Communities developed plans to open preschool classrooms in phases over a span of one to two years through opening new classrooms or enhancing existing programs through extended day or extended year options for families.
- ***Financing:*** Although all plans rely mostly on a request for implementation funding from the state, some plans mention the potential for investment from local, philanthropic and private sources.

Early Childhood Special Education/Supports for Young Children with Disabilities

The Department of Early Education and Care is engaged in several interagency efforts that support inclusive and high-quality education for young children with disabilities. EEC partners with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) in providing joint professional development and technical assistance opportunities and supports for school districts and early childhood programs. In 2016, EEC's and ESE's early childhood special education strategic areas of focus included: children's healthy social emotional development, family supports, transitions, early literacy, and educational outcomes. The Departments are jointly offering professional development and coaching on early literacy and language development that includes a two-session series which covers the topics of Promoting Vocabulary to Build Knowledge in Early Childhood Contexts, and Using Data about Early Readers for Improved Teaching and Learning. EEC participates in the state's Special Education Advisory Council coordinated by ESE. EEC is also part of the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) that advises the Department of Public Health on the Early Intervention program for children birth to age three.



In FY17 EEC is co-chairing the ICC along with a parent of a child who participated in the Early Intervention program.

EEC also supports inclusive learning environments for preschool children with disabilities through the Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments Grant program. This grant provides funding to EEC-licensed center-based preschool programs and public school preschool programs to provide preschool classrooms that serve children with and without disabilities together in an inclusive setting. In FY16, EEC awarded 92 grants totaling \$8.98 million for programs to provide inclusive preschool learning environments for 5,758 children in 184 communities across the Commonwealth (1,882 children with disabilities and 3,876 children without disabilities.) In FY17, EEC awarded 79 grants totaling \$8.43 million for programs to provide inclusive preschool learning environments for 5,519 children in 157 communities across the Commonwealth (2,125 children with disabilities and 3,394 children without disabilities.) The majority of these grantees were public school preschool programs.

Head Start

Massachusetts received a five-year \$875,000 federal grant award that funds the continuation of the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) at the Department of Early Education and Care from 2016 to 2021. The HSSCO facilitates partnerships between the 30 local Head Start agencies in Massachusetts and other state entities that provide services to benefit low-income children and their families. Head Start is a federally-funded grant program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families that provides early education and care programs for children from low-income families to support their readiness for school at Kindergarten entry. Head Start programs serve children from three to five years of age, and Early Head Start programs serve children from birth up to age three. The Department and the Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Office together developed a new five year strategic plan for 2016 to 2021 that set the following six priorities:

- 1) Partner with state child care systems, emphasizing Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships;
- 2) Work with state efforts to collect data regarding early childhood programs and child outcomes;
- 3) Support the expansion and access of high quality workforce and career development opportunities for staff;
- 4) Collaborate with the Massachusetts Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS);
- 5) Work with the state school systems to ensure continuity between Head Start and Kindergarten entrance; and
- 6) Support regional and/or state priorities that include addressing service gaps and needs of high-risk families and children in Massachusetts (including early childhood mental health and services, homeless families and their children, and the impacts of the opioid crisis).

The Massachusetts HSSCO aligns the state's activities and goals with the priorities set forth by the federal Office of Head Start; local Head Start and Early Head Start grantees across Massachusetts; the Massachusetts Head Start Association; and the federally-supported Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System for Head Start.

EEC also administers the state-funded Head Start State Supplemental Grant program, which provides funding to the 30 Head Start and Early Head Start agencies in Massachusetts to ensure that children and families have access to the full array of Head Start services. The FY17 budget appropriation of \$9.1 million supports the following activities:



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- Enhancing the programs' capacity to serve over 200 state-funded children and offer them Head Start services;
- Increasing the professional development opportunities available to staff;
- Using Head Start State Supplemental funds to support staff salaries;
- Enhancing program quality by continuing to require 100 % participation of Head Start and Early Head Start center-based and family child care programs to participate in the QRIS;
- Providing non-federal matching funds for programs (which are the only EEC funds which can be used for matching federal funds); and
- Supporting Head Start and Early Head Start approaches to school readiness to ensure that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

Early Childhood Mental Health

The Department Early Education and Care has provided funding for early childhood mental health consultation services since 2008. EEC awarded \$1.25 million in both fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to six agencies to provide mental health consultation services across the Commonwealth through the Mental Health Consultation Grant program. The consultation services offered through this grant program include mental health supports, strategies, and services that address the developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges of infants and young children and their families, help ensure children's healthy social-emotional development, and promote children's success in school. The services provided through the grant are also intended to reduce the rate of suspensions and expulsions in early education and care settings. The current fiscal year 2017 (FY17) Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation grantees are listed below. (See Appendix E for additional information about the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grant program.)

FY17 Grantees	Award	Region	Cities/Towns Served
Behavioral Health Network	\$272,643	Western	102
Community Healthlink	\$181,095	Central	65
Enable, Inc.	\$170,079	Northeast, Metrowest, Southeast	60
Justice Resource Institute	\$231,793	Southeast, Cape and Islands	69
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	\$211,820	Northeast	47
The Home for Little Wanderers	\$182,570	Metro Boston	8
Total	\$1,250,000		351

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement/Parent Child Home Program

Since its inception in fiscal year 2010, the primary role of the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant has been to identify, engage and support high needs families not involved in the formal mixed delivery system of early education and care. By linking these families to educational opportunities and comprehensive services in their communities, they will be better equipped to support their child's development and readiness for school. There are currently 89 CFCE grantees that serve 348 cities and towns across the Commonwealth, acting as community-based information and resource hubs for families with young children, especially those with multiple risk factors and/or are hard to reach, in order to increase their knowledge of, and accessibility to, high-quality early education and care programs and services. The priorities of the CFCE grant include: 1) universal and targeted outreach to families; 2)



linkages for families to comprehensive services that support family well-being and children's optimal development; 3) educational opportunities about child development and parent-child activities that promote language and literacy skills, and 4) coordination of activities and community-based resources that promote successful birth to eight transitions, with a specific focus on Kindergarten. In addition, the CFCE grant supports program quality by providing early education and out-of-school time programs with referrals to a range of local resources that meet the needs of children and families. The CFCE networks create linkages between educators and providers on the local level to professional development supports and opportunities available through EEC's statewide system of educator and provider support.

Thirty of the CFCE grantees provide Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) services. PCHP is a parenting, early literacy, and school readiness program designed to help strengthen families through verbal interaction and educational play between parents and their young children. Services are delivered to high need families through intensive home visits. Community-based early literacy specialists visit each family twice a week for two program cycles over a two-year period (typically two school calendar years), starting when a child is between 18 months and 30 months, and ending when the child enters the pre-Kindergarten year. Over the course of the program, every family receives at least 24 books and 22 educational toys or materials. EEC served approximately 700 children and families with PCHP in 2016.

In support of finding new ways to identify children who could benefit from additional resources to succeed, the CFCE networks utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) developmental screening tool to provide parents and families with information about their child's progress across five developmental domains. If the child's ASQ scores are below a specified cutoff, CFCE staff provide the family with referrals to other supports, such as Early Intervention and public preschool special education, as well as information on activities that may help support their child's development. In 2016, the CFCE networks completed 3,000 ASQ screenings.

The CFCE networks met collectively with EEC staff four times in 2016 to discuss progress on grant priorities, on the following dates: March 4, 2016, May 24, 2016, September 15, 2016, and December 15, 2016. In the latter half of 2016, EEC instituted a broader community approach to providing technical assistance and monitoring of CFCE grantees. Family and Community Quality Specialists conducted site visits with CFCE grantees, along with early childhood special education grantees and PCHP program coordinators in the same communities to identify best practices around transition, inclusion, and overall communication and collaboration between agencies. Specialists provided technical assistance, as needed, to strengthen these services and partnerships on behalf of children and families.

Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) and Screening

The Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA), a four-year initiative funded through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, concluded in June 2016 at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The MKEA promoted alignment between early education and care and elementary education by providing trainings and supports to public preschool and Kindergarten educators to successfully use observational formative assessment in their classrooms. A total of 168 public school districts participated in the MKEA initiative. Of these districts, 146 used *GOLD*® by Teaching Strategies; four used Work Sampling System®; and eighteen implemented an alternate observational tool/framework that, at a minimum, addressed children's social-emotional and cognitive development domains. Together the public school districts assessed approximately 44,000 Kindergarten children in spring 2016. In both FY16 and FY17, the Department of Early Education and Care awarded a \$400,000 grant to the Collaborative for Educational Services to provide professional development to early educators across the state on



implementing child screening and formative assessment and using assessment results to inform and improve teaching practices. Access to the training is available to early education and care programs across the mixed delivery system, and the participants receive both training and a software license for *GOLD*® by Teaching Strategies.

Strategic Direction #2: Programs offered in early childhood and out of school time settings licensed or license-exempt by the EEC will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens.

Differential Licensing and LEAD

In 2016 the Department of Early Education and Care continued planning to implement a Differential Licensing model for all program license types. Differential Licensing is an emerging best practice which conducts monitoring based directly on licensed providers' history of compliance with state regulations. In a Differential Licensing model, each licensee's level of compliance is used to determine the level of health and safety risks to children, and licensors use this to determine the frequency and/or depth of monitoring needed for each respective provider. Differential Licensing will allow the Department to identify and increase monitoring of high risk programs, as well as tailor technical assistance for licensed providers in need of improvement. Differential Licensing uses key indicators in its monitoring tools, which are the regulations that would pose the highest probability of harm to children if found to be in non-compliance. These include adequate staffing, functional communication logs, and evidence of emergency preparedness. EEC expects to fully implement Differential Licensing in early 2017. In preparation for the transition to Differential Licensing, EEC has begun using the cloud-based Licensing Education Analytic Database (LEAD) system to conduct licensing visits and store relevant data. LEAD is a single system for licensing and investigation information, and replaces the two existing licensing data systems: Licensing Manager and Complaint Tracking System. LEAD follows the licensing process from beginning to end and houses all information related to the licensing process. Phase one of the LEAD roll out began in January 2016 and included licensing investigations, mobile licensing visits and limited provider portal functionality.

Investigations

EEC continued to conduct investigations as needed to ensure the health and safety of children in care, in response to allegations of serious injuries, neglect or abuse. EEC investigates allegations of non-compliance with EEC licensing regulations, and also conducts investigations in response to any 51A reports (i.e., reports filed with the Department of Children and Families/DCF pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, sec. 51A, alleging abuse or neglect of children) that are filed against EEC-licensed or approved programs, whether they are screened in for investigation by DCF or not. From January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, EEC received 1,598 51A reports alleging abuse or neglect of children involving an EEC program. (Please note that this number may include multiple reports filed on the same allegation/incident.) These investigations are often of a complex nature addressing serious risk to the health and safety of children. EEC investigators detail their findings in written investigation reports which may recommend enforcement action up to and including emergency suspension or revocation of a program's license or approval to care for children. Very often, EEC investigators coordinate their investigations with members of the Special Investigations Unit from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as well as representatives from local and state law enforcement agencies. Investigators also testify on behalf of the agency before the Division of Administrative Law Appeals and in the Massachusetts District and Superior courts. Depending on the nature of the complaint allegations, a licensor may conduct the investigation, as part of their duties for ensuring that programs are following EEC regulations and policies.



EEC's investigation activities in 2016 included an investigation into the Eagleton School, a private residential special education program in Great Barrington approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), with residencies licensed by EEC. Due to their failure to comply with state regulations and licensing/approval requirements, EEC revoked the licenses and ESE withdrew their approval of the Eagleton School. Also in 2016, EEC developed an investigation brochure for programs and also presented to the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association on the EEC investigation process.

Background Records Checks

EEC's background records check process includes four checks: a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, a Sex Offender Record Information (SORI) check, a check of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Registry of Alleged Perpetrators, and a fingerprint-based check of the national and state criminal history databases. For three of the mandatory background checks -- CORI, SORI, and DCF Registry of Alleged Perpetrators -- EEC processed approximately 80,000 individual applications and ran an estimated 350,000 checks of these systems in 2016, as a separate query must be completed for each name (e.g., maiden name, former name, alias) listed on an application. For the fingerprint-based checks of the national and state criminal history databases, in 2016 EEC received and reviewed the results of over 30,000 individual applicants. In addition, the Department of Early Education and Care conducted weekly cross-checks of the addresses of EEC's licensed child care facilities with the addresses of registered sex offenders maintained by the Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB). When the analysis of the databases results in a match, the Department investigates the address to ensure that a registered sex offender is not located at an address where early education services are being provided. In 2016 a new data sharing process was implemented that has significantly reduced the manual effort involved in conducting the cross-checks and thus decreased the turnaround time for completing the reviews. EEC and SORB are also in the process of moving from using an individual level interchange account to establishing a dedicated interchange account between EEC and SORB for providing the data needed to conduct the address cross-check.

In October 2014, the federal Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) reauthorization was passed requiring EEC to complete four additional checks by September 2017. The additional checks include: National Criminal Information Center check, a check of the criminal database in all states where applicants resided in the previous five years, a child welfare check in all states where an applicant resided in the previous five years, and National Sex Offender Registry check.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

EEC has developed a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to support educators, programs, and systems across the Commonwealth to engage in a process of continuous quality improvement, in order to enhance outcomes for all children in Massachusetts, especially those populations most at risk. In the QRIS, program quality is measured across five areas of standards: Curriculum and Learning; Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments; Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; Family and Community Engagement; and Leadership, Management and Administration. Quality is rated across four levels, with four being the highest level of quality. At the end of 2016, 5,313 programs were participating in the QRIS with either an application in review or rating level granted by EEC. Of these programs, 5,239 had a QRIS rating level confirmed by EEC, as follows:

QRIS Level 1: 3,508 programs

QRIS Level 2: 1,501 programs

QRIS Level 3: 207 programs

QRIS Level 4: 23 programs



In both FY16 and FY17, EEC awarded a \$250,000 grant to Collaborative for Educational Services to provide training to programs at QRIS Levels 2 through 4 in the use of standardized tools for effectively measuring structural and process quality indicators as part of their self-assessment process. EEC also provided an Early Childhood Program Quality Conference in fall 2016 that provided strategies and best practices for educators and programs on continuous quality improvement.

In order to validate whether the QRIS tiers accurately reflect differential levels of program quality, EEC hired the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute to conduct a study of the QRIS and assess the extent to which quality ratings are related to children's progress in learning, development, and school readiness. In 2016, researchers from Wellesley College and UMass Donahue Institute finalized the QRIS Validation Study and made recommendations for the next generation of the QRIS, including: revising the criteria and verification requirements; allowing programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Head Start programs to enter the QRIS as Level 2 programs; reducing Lead Teacher qualification requirements; establishing a re-verification of programs at Levels 3 and 4 every three years; strengthening the self-assessment process at Level 2; and considering the use of a hybrid QRIS system with blocks at the lower 3 levels and points at the higher 2 levels. In November 2016, the study researchers and EEC Program Quality staff held public comment stakeholder meetings to discuss the validation study results, present researcher recommendations, and solicit field input for the next iteration of the QRIS. EEC plans to use feedback from these meetings in conjunction with the researchers' recommendations to frame the QRIS in 2017 and beyond.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Quality (UPK) Grant

One of the grant programs that the Department of Early Education and Care uses to improve the quality of programming for children in the Commonwealth is the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Quality (UPK) Grant. The UPK grant is awarded to programs across the mixed-delivery system of early education and care and aids in the state's efforts to improve the quality of child care programs in all communities. This grant program supports the ability of preschool programs to:

- Promote the early learning guidelines to support school readiness and positive outcomes for children participating in UPK classrooms and homes;
- Enhance the quality of services for children in UPK classrooms and family child care homes, especially for high needs children and/or children living in underperforming school districts;
- Maximize parent choice by ensuring participation from all program types within a mixed public and private service delivery system;
- Use child evidence-based formative assessment systems/tools to ensure that programs are effectively measuring children's progress across all developmental domains and using this information to inform practice through individualized teaching; and
- Serve as models of excellence, engage in communities of practice, and support the process of continuous quality improvement across the Commonwealth.

In FY 2017, EEC awarded approximately \$6 million in UPK Grants through a renewal process to 165 preschool programs and a total of 505 classrooms serving 7,928 children (of which 5,548 are "high needs" children). These 165 preschool programs consist of 95 center-based programs, 10 public school programs; and 60 system-affiliated family child care providers.



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Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund Grants

In June 2016 EEC awarded a second round of Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund grants to support facility improvements at programs that serve low-income children. Six agencies received a total of \$3.6 million dollars to renovate existing facilities or purchase new buildings. The FY16 grant awards will improve the quality of existing settings for approximately 500 children in programs licensed by EEC, will increase the capacity of these programs to serve an additional 119 children in higher quality settings, and will support the creation of 179 jobs during the grant period. The Early Education and Care and Out of School Time grants are financed through the state's capital budget and provide matching funds that leverage private investment. The Department of Early Education and Care partnered with the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation and their affiliate, the Children's Investment Fund, to administer the grant awards. The 2016 EEOST grantees and their award amounts are listed below:

Lead Agency	Service Area	Award
Aspire Developmental Services	Lynn	\$1,000,000
Brookview House, Inc	Boston	\$450,000
Community Art Center	Cambridge	\$750,000
Epiphany School	Boston	\$500,000
Guild of St. Agnes	Webster	\$700,000
Rainbow Child Development Center	Worcester	\$200,000

Standards Development in the Domains of Social-Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning

The Department of Early Education and Care partnered with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop *Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten in the Domains of Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning*, that support competency development in young children that is essential for success in school and in relationships throughout life. The Social and Emotional Learning Domains focus on Self-Knowledge, Self-Management, Social Knowledge, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. The Approaches to Play and Learning Domains focus on Initiative, Curiosity, Engagement/Persistence, Creativity, Cooperative Play and Learning, Problem Solving, Organizational Skills, and Memory. The goals for the Standards are to support all children to develop and maintain trusting, healthy, and positive interactions and relationships with both adults and peers; develop a positive sense of self; express a healthy range of emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and develop the skills needed to regulate attention, impulses, and behavior. The state provided professional development on both set of standards to trainers who provided free community trainings on the standards to educators and administrators across the state, and also developed an online training course on the Standards in both English and Spanish.

Birth to Grade Three Strategy Development

Massachusetts has embraced Birth to Grade Three (B-3) alignment as a comprehensive strategy that seeks to improve young children's access to high quality birth to grade three programs, and strengthens the capacity of schools to sustain student learning gains in the early elementary years. In 2016, the B-3 Advisory Group (consisting of representatives from EEC, the Departments of Elementary Secondary Education, Higher Education, and Public Health, as well as Strategies for Children, and two institutions of higher education) focused on examining comprehensive early childhood assessment systems, in coordination with the Early Literacy Expert Panel. As part of this work, EEC and ESE conducted a joint survey of 4,143 EEC-licensed programs and 321 ESE public school districts on screening practices. The survey data revealed the following trends:



- The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the predominant tool used by EEC programs, but school districts use a variety of tools (predominant tools include PLS-5, DIAL and ESI).
- There is not uniform understanding on what is screening and what screening tools are designed to do.
- There are trends from the survey responses that suggest a need for more professional development on screening, how to effectively and efficiently administer screening tools as part of developmentally appropriate practices in all early education and care settings.

The B-3 Advisory will continue to collaborate with the Early Literacy Expert Panel in 2017 to put forth policy guidance on effective observation-based early childhood assessment and screening, including recommendations for a screening tool.

AfterSchool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST)

In 2016, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) initiated a process to create a common set of quality indicators for all AfterSchool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) programs. As a first step, EEC and ESE contracted with the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to conduct an alignment study of ASOST quality indicators in Massachusetts. Between April and June 2016, a team of researchers at EDC, in collaboration with representatives from EEC and ESE, began with a close analysis of the following initiatives: (1) EEC's QRIS Standards for ASOST programs; (2) ESE's Quality Standards Public School Operated School Aged Child Care Programs; (3) ESE's ASOST-Quality Grant Program; (4) the 21st Century Community Learning Centers federal grant program administered by ESE; and (5) the Council on Accreditation (COA) for ASOST programs. Each of these initiatives has the goal of improving the quality of afterschool programs but approach the goal with different indicators and methods. EDC created a database of the initiatives' indicators, criteria, measurement methods, and verification protocols, and also gathered input about quality indicators from ASOST program administrators and state and national ASOST experts through interviews, focus groups, and surveys. EDC provided the following recommendations: (1) ensure state-level systems and structures are in place to support ongoing coordination between EEC and ESE to support alignment of ASOST quality initiatives; (2) engage ASOST stakeholders in articulating a common vision of high-quality ASOST services and associated definitions and terms; (3) develop and deliver messages about the importance of quality in ASOST and the need for alignment; (4) engage in a process to create a single set of ASOST quality indicators through a phased approach; (5) address barriers to participation in EEC and ESE initiatives; and (6) support additional research.

EEC also participated in the ASOST Coordinating Council co-chaired by Senator Thomas McGee and Representative Jennifer Benson. The ASOST Coordinating Council is charged with aligning ASOST efforts and initiatives of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Early Education and Care, and promoting coordination between public school districts and community-based organizations in the area of ASOST program quality and access. Two EEC staff attended the Council's meetings on April 12, 2016 and November 29, 2016. The focus of these meetings was developing recommendations for implementing a pilot project that would allow afterschool programs to share identifiable student data with public school districts.



Strategic Direction #3: The early childhood and out-of-school time workforce who works with children and families in the Commonwealth is professionally prepared, adequately compensated, and diverse.

Teacher Qualifications

The Department of Early Education and Care's Teacher Qualifications Unit oversees the issuance of certifications to educators in licensed early education and care programs, by reviewing applicants' education and experience to ensure that they possess the qualifications necessary for employment in specified positions. In 2016 the Teacher Qualifications Unit received a total of 12,784 applications and processed 12,408 applications. (These numbers represent an increase of 13% and 16%, respectively, from calendar year 2015.) In 2015, two full time staff members in the Teacher Qualifications retired under the Early Retirement Incentive Program, reducing the number of Teacher Qualifications Specialists to one full-time staff member. In 2016, the Department was able to add a 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff member to support the current 1.0 FTE. Additionally, the Teacher Qualifications Unit was able to obtain three temporary interns hired through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to assist in application processing and a number of projects related to teacher qualifications. Two separate MRC interns were also brought on to help respond to inquiries from applicants and to intake applications. These internships allowed for the individuals to gain professional experience, mentorship, and recommendations for full time, permanent employment. EEC was recognized on October 6, 2016, as an Employee Partner at the 5th Annual Disability Mentoring Day hosted by the City of Boston's Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Early Childhood Educator Scholarships

The state's Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Scholarship Program was established to increase early educators' access to higher education and to support them in attaining college degrees. The ECE Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to early education and care out-of-school time providers working in EEC-licensed or licensed-exempt programs who are pursuing Associate's or Bachelor's degrees in early childhood education or a related field at 50 colleges and universities in Massachusetts. The ECE Scholarship is jointly administered by the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Higher Education's Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). The application period for the 2016-2017 ECE Scholarship Program opened in April 2016 and EEC released an [informational video on how to apply for the scholarship](#). In total, 743 educators were approved for a scholarship that will fund the cost of up to six credits in the Fall 2016 term and up to six credits in the Spring 2017 term.

Educator and Provider Support (EPS) Networks

EEC has established Educator and Provider Support (EPS) Networks across the state that provide a statewide comprehensive system of professional development for early education and out of school time educators in Massachusetts. The EPS networks provide degree and career pathway supports such as coaching, mentoring, planning, and access to evidence-based professional development that aligns with EEC licensing regulations, EEC core competencies for early educators, Massachusetts' early learning guidelines, and the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Standards. There are five EPS networks supported through \$3.3 million in EEC grant funds, as follows:

- Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc./ Valley Opportunity Council (Western Region)
- Family Services of Central MA (Central Region)
- North Shore Community College (Northeast Region)
- Child Development and Education, Inc. (Southeast, Cape and Islands Region)
- Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (Metro Boston Region)



Professional development through the EPS Networks includes courses and trainings that address young children with disabilities, diverse learners, English language learners, children at risk of developmental delay, and children with high needs. The EPS networks also support EEC-licensed and license-exempt programs in attaining and maintaining national accreditation and upward movement in the QRIS. In 2016, the EPS networks provided a range of supports and resources to early educators and programs, including:

- Support to more than 3,700 early education and out-of-school time educators to create an individualized professional development plan that reflected the individual educators' professional goals (1,900 educators identified EEC certification as their professional goal, and over 1,300 educators identified a degree in higher education as their professional goal);
- Funding for 120 college courses in early childhood education in colleges across the Commonwealth, serving 1,939 early education and out of school time educators;
- Funding for 195 continuing education opportunities to support the professional development needs of the workforce including meeting EEC licensing hours, EEC certification requirements, and requirements related to the QRIS; just over 4,500 educators participated in these opportunities;
- Coaching and mentoring, academic advising and career counseling to over 4,000 educators and just over 1,600 programs; and
- Support for more than 600 programs in revising or completing a professional development plan or continuous quality improvement plan (the majority of programs identified upward movement in QRIS as their goal.)

Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards

The Department of Early Education and Care developed an Early English Language Development (E-ELD) Standards framework to support the development and school readiness of young dual language learners' ages 2.5 to 5.5 years. In 2016, the Department and its partner, WIDA, focused on continuing to implement training for the early education and care workforce, higher education, and families with a focus on developing knowledge, programmatic, and instructional skills and strategies related to language development for young dual language learners. To this end, the Department and WIDA published a resource guide, *Promoting Early Language Development For Dual Language Learners: A Resource For Massachusetts Educators* to help educators access skills and strategies to support dual language learners and their families. The Department also held two E-ELD Framework Institutes for educators in May and June 2016, and offered 28 professional development opportunities on the E-ELD standards to the EPS networks in 2016. The Department has developed three modules on the E-ELD standards that will be offered to EPS grantees in FY17; the first of the modules, *Introduction to the Early English Language Development Standards (E-ELD) for children 2.5 to 5.5 years old*, was offered seven times in 2016.

Post Master's Certificate Program

The Department of Early Education and Care, through its Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant award, funded the University of Massachusetts Boston to design and deliver an innovative 12-credit post Master's certificate program that advances research, policy, leadership, and data-driven practice in early education and care. This "Post Master's Certificate in Early Education Research, Policy, and Leadership" was designed to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of early educators through a one-year program of four three-credit courses that align with EEC's Core Competency Areas, QRIS Standards, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Professional Preparation Standards. This program is unique not only in the Commonwealth but nationwide. It is a program that creates a leadership pathway for early educators; serves as a pipeline to doctoral programs in early



education; and advances leadership for improvement and innovation from within the field. The program enhances educators' capacity to be change agents in ways which ensure that all young children and their families thrive. As of spring 2016, a total of 43 educators from three cohorts have completed the program and learned how to use data and research to drive improvements and innovation in practice and policy. The Department was able to fund a fourth cohort of students through June 2016 through an extension of Race to the Top Funds; the nine students in the fourth cohort will graduate in May 2017.

Peer Assistance and Coaching

In 2016, the Department continued the Peer Assistance and Coaching (PAC) project, which uses peer-to-peer coaching to support educators' growth and change. This type of peer coaching combines the promise of coaching as an effective strategy to improve quality and the reality that the existing early childhood teachers and directors may be well-equipped to support one another's practices. EEC contracted with Early Childhood Associates to conduct additional training of trainers on the PAC model and to design and deliver training to EEC Technical Assistance Specialists with the goal of embedding the model and its lessons learned into practice in the current professional development delivery and consultant coaching structure and into the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Professional Development Conference for Early Educators: EarlyEdCon

For the second year in a row, the Department partnered with the Educator and Provider Support grantee for Region 3 at North Shore Community College, the Northeast Regional Readiness Center at Salem State University, and Burlington Public Schools, to offer EarlyEdCon -- a professional development conference for early educators. EarlyEdCon was held on Saturday, October 15, 2016 and was open to early education and out-of-school time providers across the Commonwealth. The conference topics included language and literacy skill development; preschool Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education; and children's social and emotional development. EEC expects to offer an EarlyEdCon in the western part of the state in Spring 2017.

Professional Qualifications Registry

Educators working in EEC-licensed programs serving children from birth through school age, regardless of setting, must create an individual educator profile in EEC's Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR) and update it annually. EEC requires educators who work in programs that are not subject to EEC licensure, including those who work in public preschools, to register if they would like to participate in trainings funded by EEC or are working in programs that are participating in EEC's Quality Rating Improvement System. At the end of 2016, there were about 125,000 total records in the PQR, of which approximately 100,000 are likely valid records, as the pending categories often include duplicate records. The PQR is connected to the Teacher Qualifications (TQ) System and the Online Professional Development Calendar.

Professional Development Calendar

EEC's online Professional Development Calendar allows educators to search for trainings by geography, training category, credit type, age group, type of setting, position level, level of experience, and education level. All entities receiving professional development funds from EEC must list their professional development opportunities on the calendar. Educators participating in training listed on the calendar by EEC Grantees have that training verified and placed into their Professional Qualifications Registry records after completing the training. The Professional Development Calendar collects data on opportunities offered throughout the state, allowing EEC to identify and respond to gaps in professional development as well as to collect demographics on the educators accessing the professional development offerings.



Professional Qualifications Categories of Study Course Identification Project

EEC contracted with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute to review and align the QRIS professional development requirements and the EEC Educator Core Competencies with the EEC Licensing Categories of Study, and to conduct a review and examination of the Teacher Qualifications system, with the goal of developing recommendations to revise, align, and revamp the system to respond to the progressing needs of EEC and its workforce. This project includes an economic impact study to assess the potential costs of increasing early education and care workers' educational requirements. The key findings to date include:

- EEC's Categories of Study are lacking in the areas of Language and Literacy despite research to support its inclusion in the training of educators. The state should add Language and Literacy as an additional category of study.
- Educators are taking professional development that meets EEC's Categories of Study requirements but they are not credit-bearing toward a formal degree.
- Two-year institutions of higher education are more focused on EEC credentials while four-year institutions of higher education are more focused on ESE licensure.
- There is no single, unified, stackable early education pathway: the system is split between preparing educators for center-based child care settings versus public school settings. There is no pathway for AfterSchool and Out-of-School Time educators. The Child Development Associate (CDA) serves as the beginning of a pathway for Family Child Care educators.
- There is content knowledge required within EEC's Categories of Study that is only offered by a few institutions.
- There is a need for experiential learning opportunities for those whose do not have a practicum.



Strategic Direction #4: The Department and Board of Early Education and Care will provide leadership, direction and resources to meet the mission of the agency with utmost integrity, transparency and accountability to the people of the Commonwealth.

FY17 Budget

The FY17 General Appropriation Act (GAA) provided \$553.1 million in funding for EEC's total budget. Below is a brief summary of EEC's FY17 budget accounts:

3000-1000 / Administration: The FY17 appropriation totals \$5.6 million. Roughly \$6.7 million in quality-related salaries paid from this account in FY16 was transferred to the new Quality Supports account (3000-1020), below.

3000-1020 / Quality Supports: This account, funded at \$32,397,638, represents a line item consolidation of most quality activities that EEC performs, including Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) grants (formerly line item 3000-5075), Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (formerly line item 3000-6075), and Services for Infants and Parents (see line item 3000-7050 below.) Appropriation 3000-1020 has within it earmark language as follows: *"For quality investments in early education and care, including not less than \$4,000,000 to be expended for training, research, and grants related to the development of the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), of which not less than \$2,000,000 shall be expended for direct grants to early education and school age programs participating in the Massachusetts QRIS that are actively engaged in efforts to achieve Level 3 and Level 4 in order to improve quality in early education and school age system of care."* The \$32.4 million in the new Quality Supports line item was consolidated from six accounts, including the line-items listed in the following table:

Line item	Account name- specific transfers	Transfers to Quality Account
3000-1000	EEC Admin- Licensor salaries, travel, fringe	(6,754,471)
3000-7050	Community & Family Supports- Staff, QRIS, EPS grants, misc.	(7,872,890)
3000-5075	Universal Pre-Kindergarten- all funding	(7,400,000)
3000-6075	Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation- all funding	(750,000)
3000-3060	Supportive/DTA- Mental Health Grants	(600,000)
3000-4060	Income Eligible- IPLE Grants	(9,019,276)
3000-1020	Early Education and Care Quality Supports	32,396,637

3000-2000 / Access Management: This account is for the regional administration and coordination of services provided by Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies. The FY17 appropriation of \$6,675,311 is the same level as FY16.

3000-3060 / Supportive-DTA: This account provides early education and care and afterschool services for children referred by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). Legislative language requires this account to provide immediate access to all eligible families referred by DCF and DTA. The GAA maintains transferability from 3000-4060 to this account, but no funds are allowed to be transferred out of 3000-3060. The account was funded at \$219,416,837 in FY17.



3000-4060 / Income Eligible: The FY17 budget includes \$252,453,572 for Income Eligible Child Care, which provides child care, early education, and afterschool financial assistance for children from low-income and at-risk families through vouchers and contracts.

3000-5000 / Head Start: The FY17 budget provided \$9.1 million for supplemental salary grants for 30 federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start agencies to support their programs.

3000-6025 / Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative: This account was included in the FY17 budget and funded at \$200,000 to provide grants to communities to conduct research to determine their capacity to expand pre-Kindergarten opportunities on a voluntary basis to children ages 2 years and 9 months to 3 years and 11 months old or, for communities already awarded planning grants and/ or participating in the federal Preschool Expansion Grant program, to implement plans for expanded pre-Kindergarten or preschool opportunities.

3000-7050 Services for Infants and Parents: As part of the larger quality consolidation, \$7,872,290 was transferred out of this account to the 3000-1020 Quality Supports appropriation, representing staff and grant funding that is related to improving quality in child care programs. Activities related to providing services to parents through the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program and the Early Childhood Resource Centers programs remained in this account, and were funded at \$13,441,999.

3000-7070 Reach Out and Read: This account was funded at \$1 million in the FY17 GAA. Due to mid-year revenue forecasts the line item was reduced.

1599-0042 Center Based Rate Reserve: The FY17 budget included \$12.5 million to support a 3.6% rate increase for all Center Based Providers and for the FCC System admin fee.

Grants Administration

EEC continues to use an online application for most grants, including the following grants awarded in FY17: the Head Start State Supplemental Grant, the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant, the Inclusive Preschool grant, the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services grant, the Educator and Provider Support grant, the Universal Pre-Kindergarten grant, and the Early Childhood Special Education grant. In 2016, EEC added the FY17 Final Financial Reporting forms to the online system in addition to the FY17 Budget Amendment forms.

Child Care Financial Assistance System (CCFA)

In July 2016, EEC rolled out the billing module in the Child Care Financial Assistance system (CCFA), which is the platform for managing approximately \$500 million annually in child care subsidies. All subsidized child care providers now use CCFA as an end-to-end system for managing child care subsidies, including eligibility authorization, placement, daily attendance, billing, and reporting. EEC pays providers based on the attendance and placement data submitted via CCFA. In FY16, providers billed EEC outside of CCFA based on an estimated invoice, and EEC paid the estimated invoice amount. EEC is now in the process of reconciling the FY16 payments with the FY16 data subsequently submitted in CCFA, and is repaying and recouping any differences between what was billed through CCFA and what was paid by EEC through FY16 estimated billing. Repayment to providers that are owed money by EEC was paid the first month of the reconciliation, in November 2016. Recoupment from providers that owe EEC money is collected over a longer period depending on the balance due.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Annual Reporting Requirements

M.G.L. c. 15D, Sec. 3:

(g) The board shall submit an annual report to the secretary of education, the secretary of administration and finance, and the clerks of the House of Representatives and senate, who shall forward the same to the joint committee on education, describing its progress in achieving the goals and implementing the programs authorized in this chapter. The report shall evaluate the progress made toward universal early education and care for preschool-aged children and toward reducing expulsion rates through developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention services.

The department shall include an annual report on behavioral health indicators that includes estimates of the annual rates of preschool suspensions and expulsions, the types and prevalence of behavioral health needs of children served by the department, the racial and ethnic background of the children with identified behavioral health needs, the existing capacity to provide behavioral health services, and an analysis of the best intervention and prevention practices, including strategies to improve the delivery of comprehensive services and to improve collaboration between and among early education and care and human services providers. The report and any recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes shall be submitted by February 15th to the secretary of health and human services, the secretary of administration and finance, the children's behavioral health advisory council, the child advocate, and the general court by filing it with the house committee on ways and means, the senate committee on ways and means, the joint committee on education, the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the clerk of the house and the clerk of the senate.

M.G.L. c. 15D, Sec. 5:

The board shall develop and annually update an implementation plan for a workforce development system designed to support the education, training and compensation of the early education and care workforce, including all center, FCC, infant, toddler, preschool and school-age providers. The board shall solicit input from organizations and agencies that represent a diverse spectrum of expertise, knowledge and understanding of broader workforce development issues and of the professional development needs of the early childhood and care workforce. In order to inform the plan, the board shall conduct:

- (1) an inventory and assessment of the current resources and strategies available for workforce and professional development in the commonwealth, including but not limited to Head Start trainings, community-based trainings, higher education programs, child care resource and referral agency trainings, state and federally funded workforce development trainings/programs, public school system trainings/credentialing, and other trainings that address the needs of those who work with children and make recommendations for coordinating the use of those existing resources and strategies;
- (2) analyses using current data on the status of the early education and care workforce, including work experience, certifications, education, training opportunities, salaries, benefits and workplace standards; and
- (3) an assessment of the workforce capacity necessary to meet the state's early education and care needs in the future.

In the development of the plan, the board shall consider:

- (1) core competencies, a common and shared body of knowledge, for all those working in the early education and care fields;
- (2) streamlined and coordinated state certification, credentialing, and licensing within the early education and care fields including teacher and provider certification and licensing, the child development associate, public



- school teacher certification, and other program standards as appropriate for director, teacher and provider credentialing requirements;
- (3) a mandatory and regularly updated professional development and qualification registry;
 - (4) agreements among IHEs for an articulated system of education, training, and professional development in early education and care;
 - (5) approval of early education and care training programs and academic coursework, incentives for associates and bachelors programs to meet best practices and to modify curricula to reflect current child development research, and certification of trainers and teachers;
 - (6) coordination of existing workforce resources among public agencies, including establishing regional workforce support resources in coordination with child care resource and referral agencies;
 - (7) a range of professional development and educational opportunities that provide appropriate coursework and degree pathways for FCC as well as center-based providers at all levels of the career ladder that are available in locations, days, and times that are accessible;
 - (8) credit for prior learning experiences, development of equivalencies to 2 and 4 year degrees, and the inclusion of strategies for multiple pathways for entry into the field of early education and care;
 - (9) recruitment and retention of individuals into the early education and care workforce who reflect the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity of Massachusetts families based on the current census data;
 - (10) incentives and supports for early education and care professionals to seek additional training and education, such as scholarships, stipends, loan forgiveness connected to a term of service in the field, career counseling and mentoring, release time and substitutes;
 - (11) guidelines for a career ladder or career lattice representing salaries and benefits that suitably compensate professionals for increases in educational attainment and with incentives for advancement, including a salary enhancement program;
 - (12) public and private resources to support the workforce development system;
 - (13) a data collection and evaluation system to determine whether the workforce and professional development activities established pursuant to this chapter are achieving recruitment, retention and quality of the workforce goals;
 - (14) ways to recognize and honor advancement in educational attainment among early educational and care professionals;
 - (15) professional development opportunities that are provided in languages other than English, and incorporation of these opportunities into any broader, articulated system that is developed; and
 - (16) alignment of the core competencies, course offerings and other professional development opportunities, where appropriate, with the program quality standards established under section 11.
 - (17) training to identify and address infant toddler and early childhood behavioral health needs.

M.G.L. c. 15D, Sec. 10:

The board shall include in its annual report rules and regulations promulgated by the board relative to the use of civil fines and sanctions, the types of sanctions, and the amount of those fines.

M.G.L. c. 15D, Sec. 13(d):

The department of early education and care, with the approval of the board and in consultation with the state advisory committee on early education and care established in [section 3A](#), shall study and present any additional recommendations on the programmatic, financing, and phase-in options for the development and universal implementation of the Massachusetts universal pre-Kindergarten program. This study shall include an estimate of the need for full-day, full-year care that meets the needs of parents who work full-time and shall include the number of pre-school aged children in the commonwealth who may be at risk due to family poverty, TAFDC status, special needs, or other risk factors. The department shall include its findings and recommendations, and any updates of its findings, in the annual report required under section 3.



Appendix B: Licensing Data

New Licensing Enforcement Actions	# in 2010	# in 2011	# in 2012	# in 2013	# in 2014	# in 2015	# in 2016
Sanctions	6	10	5	17	22	19	25
Acknowledgment of Vol. Surrender	3	1	13	31	17	27	14
Revocation (license and TQ)	5	9	17	6	17	15	26
Cease and Desist	8	12	9	24	28	12	30
C&D w/ Civ. Injunc.	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
C&D w/ Crim. Pen.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal to Renew/Issue	1	5	3	4	6	6	5
Emergency Suspension	3	7	8	4	10	19	12
Legal Agreement	2	3	4	1	8	16	5
Legal Consult	2	1	2	4	2	11	12
Appeal of CORI/DCF denial	1	2	0	4	11	16	6
Enforcement Mtg.	0	1	3	0	1	1	3
Fine	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Correction Order	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	32	56	65	97	107	142	139

NOTE: Many licensing legal referrals require multiple actions (i.e. emergency suspension/revocation, sanctions and fine, etc.)



2016 Annual Report to the Legislature Department of Early Education and Care

Appendix B: Licensing Data (CONTINUED)

LICENSED PROGRAMS	Jan (2016)	Feb (2016)	Mar (2016)	Apr (2016)	May (2016)	June (2016)	July (2016)	August (2016)	Sept (2016)	Oct (2016)	Nov (2016)	Dec (2016)
Central MA	1,819	1,817	1,810	1,803	1,801	1,792	1,776	1,768	1,774	1,778	1,782	1,791
Metro Boston	2,118	2,107	2,105	2,107	2,105	2,096	2,086	2,083	2,075	2,073	2,059	2,046
Northeast	2,192	2,179	2,170	2,171	2,172	2,183	2,171	2,175	2,184	2,170	2,164	2,167
Southeast & Cape	1,789	1,784	1,780	1,773	1,772	1,761	1,747	1,750	1,754	1,746	1,756	1,751
Western	1,620	1,615	1,615	1,607	1,610	1,600	1,591	1,601	1,596	1,582	1,582	1,569
Total # Programs	9,538	9,502	9,480	9,461	9,460	9,432	9,371	9,377	9,383	9,349	9,343	9,324
LICENSED CAPACITY	Jan (2016)	Feb (2016)	Mar (2016)	Apr (2016)	May (2016)	June (2016)	July (2016)	August (2016)	Sept (2016)	Oct (2016)	Nov (2016)	Dec (2016)
Family Child Care	47,718	47,498	47,357	47,202	47,187	47,183	46,858	46,785	46,710	46,535	46,460	46,291
Small Group/School Age	267	247	227	232	247	357	347	356	355	372	252	295
Large Group/School Age	175,611	175,713	176,065	176,575	176,674	176,532	176,172	177,187	178,579	178,591	178,880	178,709
Residential & Placement	6,767	6,783	6,783	6,821	6,754	6,698	6,728	6,755	6,746	6,716	6,718	6,711
Total Licensed Capacity	230,363	230,241	230,432	230,830	230,862	230,770	230,105	231,083	232,390	232,214	232,310	232,006
LICENSE ACTIVITY	Jan (2016)	Feb (2016)	Mar (2016)	Apr (2016)	May (2016)	June (2016)	July (2016)	August (2016)	Sept (2016)	Oct (2016)	Nov (2016)	Dec (2016)
New	31	37	51	24	49	34	17	77	70	45	48	58
Renewal	220	263	263	285	296	334	206	241	242	201	231	264
Reopen	8	9	4	2	3	8	1	10	16	8	9	1
Moves	26	10	25	17	19	21	21	31	30	17	22	19
Closed Programs	64	85	81	50	71	84	79	77	71	85	66	74
New Applications Received	69	51	70	46	71	67	64	114	92	54	58	63
Total Licenses Issued	285	319	343	328	367	397	245	359	358	271	310	342
COMPLAINTS	Jan (2016)	Feb (2016)	Mar (2016)	Apr (2016)	May (2016)	June (2016)	July (2016)	August (2016)	Sept (2016)	Oct (2016)	Nov (2016)	Dec (2016)
# of closed complaints during the month	155	208	262	203	244	299	225	266	184	227	254	312
# of new complaints received during month	194	230	272	249	254	183	257	269	278	274	304	239
# of open complaints on 1st day of month	415	447	456	465	503	597	472	500	504	598	644	693
# of open complaints on 1st day of the month with interim report completed	29	30	35	44	51	56*	50*	50*	40*	27*	24*	25*

Note(s): Licensing information includes data for open/ active FCC, GCC, SACC and R&P programs; delegated and exempt programs, but excludes FCC Assistants. Number of programs and total capacity are calculated on the 1st day of the following month. If GCC has Limited SACC, they are counted as one program and their capacity is combined. Complaint information includes data for all types of intakes: Complaint, Voluntary Incident, Mandatory Incidents, Injury/Illness Review and Internal Investigation. In June 2016, EEC transitioned to using a new system for recording licensing information – the Licensing Education Analytic Database (LEAD). LEAD is more comprehensive in recording licensing visits. EEC will report the Licensing visit data from LEAD in the 2017 Annual Report.

Data Source(s): Licensed Programs, Licensed Capacity, and License Activity data are pulled from Licensing Manager. Complaints are pulled from EECRS, Licensing Manager and FCC Mobile for January to mid-June 2016, and also from LEAD for mid-June to December 2016.

***LEAD does not contain this data.**



Appendix C: 2016 Caseload Data and Financial Assistance Appeals

2016 Caseload by Age

Age Group	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16
Infant	2,841	2,911	2,967	2,945	2,941	2,895	2,769	2,844	3,074	3,123	3,079	2,872
Toddler	8,965	9,130	9,346	9,182	9,173	9,020	8,769	8,781	9,151	9,339	9,286	8,907
Preschool	18,208	18,267	18,509	18,569	18,526	18,424	17,957	17,928	18,520	18,088	18,154	17,504
School Age	24,700	25,518	26,148	26,768	26,949	29,227	28,280	28,193	25,569	23,415	23,829	23,336
Total	54,714	55,826	56,970	57,464	57,589	59,566	57,775	57,746	56,314	53,965	54,348	52,619

* All data based on billed actuals

2016 Caseload by Account

Child Care Account	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16
Supportive	6,998	7,078	7,234	7,277	7,511	7,891	7,967	7,965	7,831	7,347	7,421	7,359
DTA-Related Care	13,278	13,287	13,500	13,546	13,577	13,922	13,486	13,467	13,174	12,910	13,002	12,250
Income Eligible	34,011	34,393	34,544	34,799	34,652	35,950	36,322	36,314	35,309	33,708	33,925	33,010
Waitlist Remediation Income Eligible	427	1,068	1,692	1,842	1,849	1,803	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Children	54,714	55,826	56,970	57,464	57,589	59,566	57,775	57,746	56,314	53,965	54,348	52,619

* All data based on billed actuals

2016 Financial Assistance Due Process Actions

Subsidy Appeals	2010 Total	2011 Total	2012 Total	2013 Total	2014 Total	2015 Total	2016 Total
Requests for Financial Assistance Review	847	1,226	928	974	1,073	1,065	924
Reviews Completed	840	900	864	888	846	500	556
Requests for Financial Assistance Hearing	37	60	41	94	83	63	55
30A Subsidy Appeals in Superior Court	1	0	0	0	1	3	2



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Appendix D: Income Eligible Waitlist Data

EEC maintains a waitlist of Income Eligible families who are seeking child care financial assistance, using the online self-serve waitlist program (KinderWait). EEC's financial assistance procedures provide that "inactive" records (i.e., 12 or more months of no applicant activity) are to be removed and archived from the waitlist; this procedure is utilized in order to keep the waitlist current.

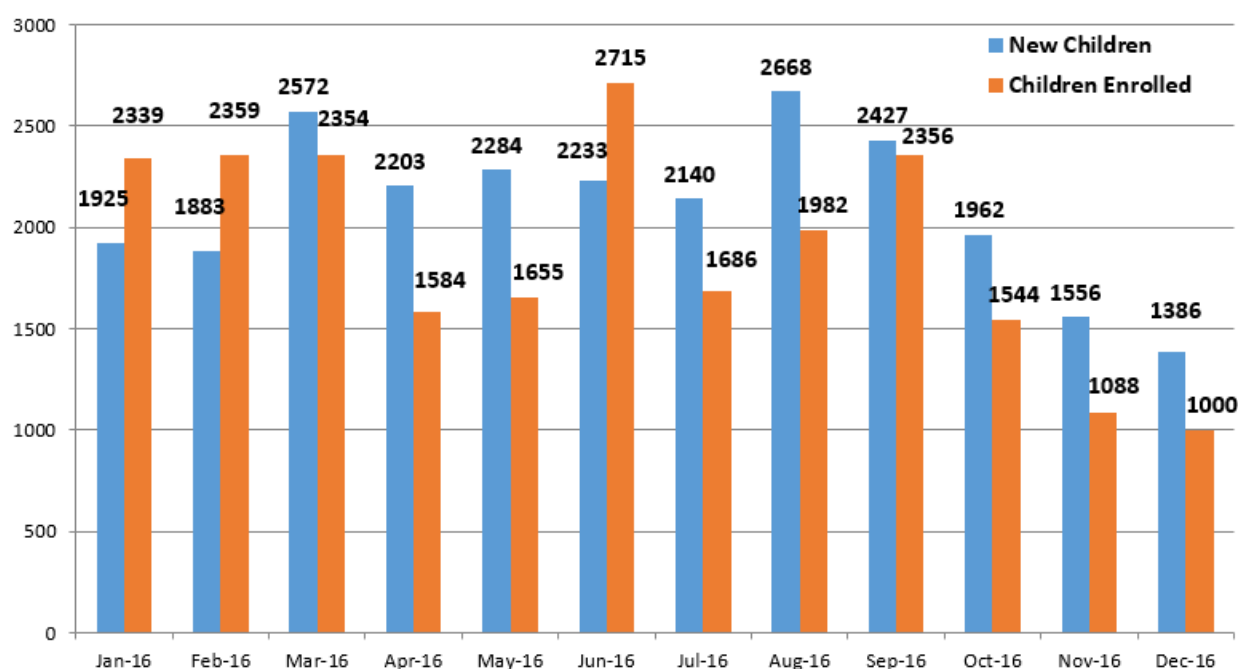
Waitlist by Age Group (over time):

2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Infants	4,098	3,957	3,940	4,036	4,204	4,209	4,214	4,322	4,344	4,269	4,133	4,023
Toddlers	5,339	5,030	4,978	5,082	5,248	5,444	5,460	5,756	5,670	5,580	5,332	5,121
Preschool	5,334	5,384	5,215	5,668	6,048	6,329	6,220	6,130	5,597	5,197	4,832	4,563
School Age	10,290	9,872	9,692	10,054	11,058	10,837	9,997	10,427	10,569	10,613	10,023	9,855
Total I/T/P	14,771	14,371	14,133	14,786	15,500	15,982	15,894	16,208	15,611	15,046	14,297	13,707
Total	25,061	24,243	23,825	24,840	26,558	26,819	25,891	26,635	26,180	25,659	24,320	23,562

Waitlist Activity:

2016	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total WL	25,061	24,243	23,825	24,840	26,558	26,819	25,891	26,635	26,180	25,659	24,320	23,562
# deactivated	2,604	3,500	3,582	1,703	1,706	2,662	3,531	2,890	3,580	3,502	2,935	3,017
# reactivated	185	330	222	173	153	280	250	303	345	232	145	184

New Children on the Waitlist vs. Children Enrolled per Month: CY2016





Appendix E: Mental Health Consultation Grant Information

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program

EEC receives state funding to administer an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program, which provides resources to support young children and their families experiencing emotional and behavioral challenges. The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program promotes school success and healthy social-emotional development, and aims to reduce the suspension and expulsion rate in early education and care settings. The consultation services involve general classroom/program and on-site child focused observations, which may include the use of evidenced based observation tools used to identify strategies for improving the learning environment and to assess children's social-emotional and behavioral skills. Consultants meet with educators and families to discuss the strengths and needs of the classroom and/or the child and work together to develop classroom management plans and/or individualized behavior plans to support the needs of specific children. Consultants also provide on-site modeling/coaching to educators to provide guidance on how to provide appropriate responses to address challenging behaviors. If the child presents with behaviors that may require more intensive services, beyond the scope of consultation, the consultants will assist programs and families in locating and accessing appropriate additional services, which may include Early Intervention, special education services and/ or behavioral health services through a community-based mental health service provider.

In FY2017 EEC competitively awarded the Early Childhood Mental Health grants to six agencies:

FY17 Grantees	Award	Region	Cities/Towns Served
Behavioral Health Network	\$272,643	Western	102
Community Healthlink	\$181,095	Central	65
Enable, Inc.	\$170,079	Northeast, Metrowest, Southeast	60
Justice Resource Institute	\$231,793	Southeast, Cape and Islands	69
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	\$211,820	Northeast	47
The Home for Little Wanderers	\$182,570	Metro Boston	8
Total	\$1,250,000		351

Below are data on the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Grant program in 2016:

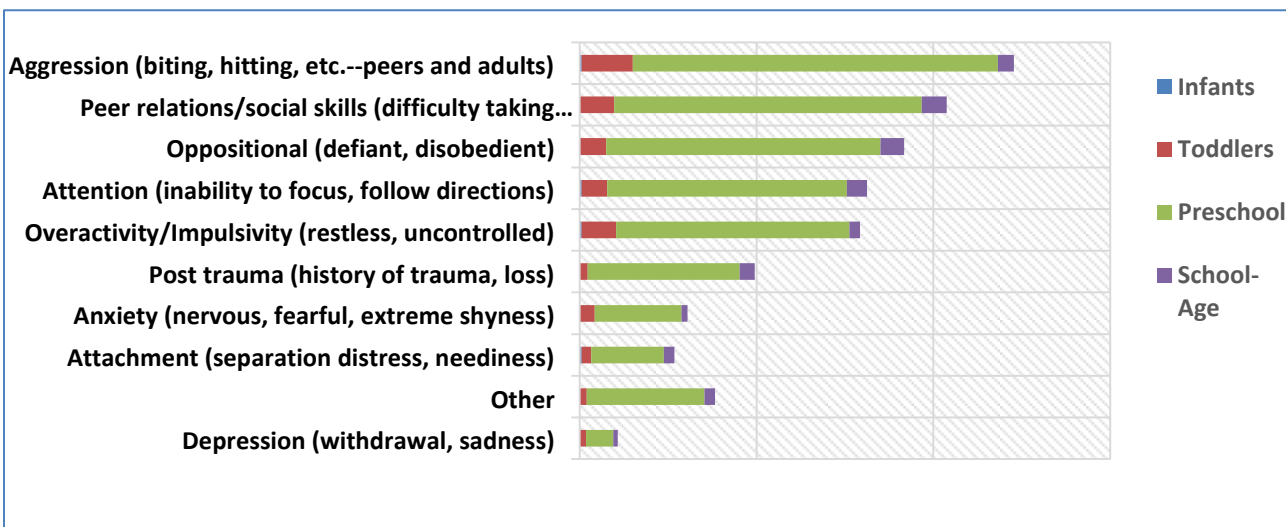
ECMH Services - Mid Year Comparison: <i>Numbers Served and Hours of Consultation Provided</i>					
Period	Programs	Classrooms	Educators	Hours of Consultation	# of Children Served
Jan. - June 2016	366	514	1,822	8,044	6,399
July - Dec. 2016	319	531	1,244	3,805	6,618

Behavioral Issues Identified in Children who Received Child / Family Focused Consultation (CY 2016)				
Period	Children Served	Hours of Consultation	Children/Families Received Intensive Therapy	Children/Families Received Early Intervention/Special Ed
Jan. - June 2016	706	6,363	29%	29%
July - Dec. 2016	591	5,681	25%	11.5%



Aggression (biting, hitting, etc.--peers and adults)
Peer relations/social skills (difficulty taking turns, sharing, negotiating, social bullying)
Attention (inability to focus, follow directions)
Oppositional (defiant, disobedient)
Over activity/Impulsivity (restless, uncontrolled)
History of trauma

Frequency of behavioral concerns for the children receiving child / family focused consultation services.*



*Children with more than one behavioral concern were counted for each concern.

The ECMH grantees report to EEC the number of children they provided services to who were at risk of suspension or expulsion from an early education program. In 2016, 315 of the children who were served were identified as "at risk" for suspension or expulsion. Outcomes for these children, by age, is below:

2016 Suspension/Expulsion of Children Served by ECMH	Infant	Toddler	PreK	School-Age	Total	Rate
Retained successfully in program	3	32	162	29	226	71.75%
Retained but at risk of suspension/expulsion	0	2	15	10	27	8.57%
Transitioned to new program that better addresses needs	0	1	16	0	17	5.40%
Suspended from program	0	0	1	0	1	0.32%
Expelled from program; has new program	0	1	3	0	4	1.27%
Expelled from program; no new program	0	3	9	0	12	3.81%
Aged out of program	0	0	4	0	4	1.27%
Other	0	2	20	2	24	7.62%
TOTALS	3	41	230	41	315	



For the children who were expelled from care, the ECMH consultants reported that these children often exhibited extremely unsafe behaviors and were frequently “asked to leave the program” before strategies for retention could be implemented by the program and educators.

The most frequent strategies used by the early childhood mental health consultant to successfully prevent or reduce suspension and expulsion in early education settings in 2016 were *consultation to staff, consultation to parent, modeling of strategies, individual behavior plans, case management supports, and programmatic modifications* (i.e. schedules/routine, suspension/expulsion policies).